Amendments to the claims:

1. (currently amended) A process for protecting a surface of an ~~An~~ elastomer part from degradation due to ~~for~~ exposure to reactive plasma, said process comprising imparting ~~part having~~ a magnetic flux density of at least 10 gauss to said ~~at its~~ surface of said part prior to exposing said part to reactive plasma whereby weight loss of said part is at least 20% less than weight loss of a second identical elastomer part, not having a magnetic flux density of at least 10 gauss at its surface, exposed to reactive plasma under identical conditions.

2. (currently amended) A process ~~An elastomer part~~ of claim 1 wherein said magnetic flux density is at least 200 gauss.

3. (currently amended) A process ~~An elastomer part~~ of claim 1 wherein a source of magnetic flux density is magnetic material contained within said part.

4. (currently amended) A process ~~An elastomer part~~ of claim 3 wherein said magnetic material is at least one magnet selected from the group consisting of permanent magnets and electromagnets.

5. (currently amended) A process ~~An elastomer part~~ of claim 4 wherein said permanent magnet is selected from the group consisting of ferrite magnets, ferrite-rubber magnets, aluminum-nickel-cobalt magnets, samarium-cobalt magnets and neodymium magnets.

6. (currently amended) A process ~~An elastomer part~~ of claim 1 wherein a source of magnetic flux density is one or more magnets external to said part, wherein said magnets are placed in close proximity to said [[a]] surface of said part which is exposed to plasma while in use.

7. (currently amended) A slit valve door for exposure to reactive plasma, said door having a sealing surface and an elastomer part mounted on said sealing surface and wherein at least one magnet is mounted on said door, said magnet mounted in close proximity to said elastomer part so as to result in a magnetic flux density of at least 10 gauss on a surface of said elastomer part that is exposed to reactive plasma when in use whereby weight loss of said part is at least 20% less than weight loss of a second identical elastomer part, not having a magnetic flux density of at least 10 gauss at its surface, exposed to reactive plasma under identical conditions.

8. (currently amended) A pipe flange for exposure to reactive plasma, said flange having a sealing surface and an elastomer part mounted on said sealing surface and wherein at least one magnet is mounted on said sealing surface, said magnet mounted in close proximity to said elastomer part so as to result in a magnetic flux density of at least 10 gauss on a

surface of said elastomer part that is exposed to reactive plasma when in use whereby weight loss of said part is at least 20% less than weight loss of a second identical elastomer part, not having a magnetic flux density of at least 10 gauss at its surface, exposed to reactive plasma under identical conditions.